

Carpenter Bees

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Carpenter bees are large, yellow and black (or blue-black) bees that become active in early spring. This bee is commonly 2/3 to 1 inch long, usually with a shiny abdomen and a yellow thorax. Its look-alike cousins (**bumble bees**) have a fuzzy abdomen. Although it is rare to be stung by one, their sheer size is scary and people generally stay clear of them. Bumble bees do not bore into wood, as do carpenter bees.

Carpenter Bee Biology

Carpenter bees get their name from their ability to drill through wood and nest in the hole. Their drilling creates a near-perfect hole, approximately 1/2 inch in diameter. The hole is usually located on the underside of the wood surface; including siding, soffits, decks, overhangs, fence posts and window frames. Although the hole appears to be only an inch or two deep, it rarely ends there.

- The female carpenter bee will turn 90 degrees and bore a channel from 6 inches to as long as 4 feet. This channel serves as a main corridor from which she will drill small chambers a few inches deep. These chambers become egg holders. She will deposit an egg, bring in a mass of pollen for the newly hatched larvae to feed on, and then seal it all off to ensure it's development before she repeats the process for the next egg.
- The male spends most of his time flying around the nest playing guard. Simply killing the male will not solve your problem. You must treat the nest.

Signs of Carpenter Bee Infestations

Half-inch, round holes appear, and piles of sawdust are found underneath. Along with the coarse frass (sawdust) found underneath the nest entrance, there are usually dirty-yellow streaks of fecal matter staining the wood below the hole. If you are near a nest, you will likely be *buzzed* by the male carpenter bee on guard. He is loud and aggressive, but remember that he does not have the ability to sting you. The female can sting but she is normally very docile. A single pair (male and female) occupies each nest. It is not uncommon to find several pair of carpenter bees nesting in one structure. They frequently nest near each other and often in the

same area year after year, causing extensive damage. You may find old holes near newer ones. Sometimes the female will renovate an old nest gallery and reuse it.

Control of Carpenter Bees, Carpenter Bee Elimination

To control carpenter bees, do not concentrate on the adults. The annoying male bees are easy to kill with a wasp freeze such as PT515. However, killing the male will do nothing to stop the cycle. You must treat the nest with a product which will have a long residual killing time. If you spray liquid residuals in their hole, you may kill the female bee. The eggs are protected, however, and six to twelve months later the larva will emerge. Since liquids are absorbed by porous wood, they will be gone when the larva hatch. This means the larva have a strong chance of survival.

To insure complete control, use a dust called Drione. It has a desiccant action and can remain active up to 3 months in the nest and the nest galleries. When the larva emerge they will be dehydrated by the Drione Dust. Apply the Drione (using a Crusader Duster) to the nest openings and deep inside the cavities drilled by the carpenter bees. This will kill any emerging carpenter bees and larva in the future. Since the holes can penetrate several feet, you should use an applicator like the Crusader Duster. This tool will help you to apply the dust with enough force to reach deep in the nest where the eggs and larva will be living. Carpenter bee nesting holes which are situated in high areas that cannot be reached safely by using a step ladder call for the use of a special tool. The Dustick is a tool designed to apply dust in higher places. Each Dustick Duster is shipped with four extension poles, a hand pump and special tip for applying dusts in holes, cracks and crevices. You can reach areas as high as 6 feet when using one extension pole and as high as twenty feet when all four extension poles are combined. **Dustick Ordering Information**

You should also treat any wood surface that you wish to protect with Suspend SC, Tempo WP or with Cynoff WP. Wettable powders (Tempo WP and Cynoff WP) are used extensively by pest control operators throughout the United States for most of their monthly, quarterly or once-a-year pest control accounts. These products are active against many pests including carpenter bees.

Suspend SC is a more versatile product that can be used in more areas than other insecticides. To the layman, differences in control of carpenter bees is about the same whether Suspend or Cynoff is used for the job. Professional pest control technicians will usually use Cynoff WP or Demon WP for longest possible residual but prefer to use Suspend SC, Demon EC (Demon Max) or Cynoff EC when control is needed without a visible residue on darker surfaces.

If your home has cedar siding or is a log home:

Wettable powder formulations will leave a visible residue on dark surfaces which is undesirable for some people. Cedar and log homes may also be bombarded with carpenter bees which requires special attention. Most of our customers who have these types of homes prefer to use Demon EC or Cynoff EC for their carpenter bee elimination. Both of these products contain Cypermethrin (an active ingredient which gives excellent knock down of carpenter bees) without leaving a visible residue. These products are also much cheaper to use when treating larger areas or

where high volumes of insecticide spray is required. When treating these larger areas (on log or cedar homes) use a hose-end sprayer for application. This allows you to treat exterior walls with greater ease and reach higher areas without having to use a step ladder. For severe infestations of carpenter bees on cedar and log, you will need to spray twice (2 weeks apart) the first month. After your spray has been allowed to dry, apply your Drione Dust to all possible carpenter bee holes or entry points. Repeat spray and dust as necessary.

Choose the product that best suits your overall needs for pest control in and around your home or business. Tempo WP and Cynoff WP are all wettable powders (powder concentrates that are mixed with water for spraying for various insect pests) which are odorless and give at least 90 day residual action indoors. Cynoff EC and Demon EC are liquid concentrates which give about 30 days residual and no visible residue. Mix 1/2 to 1 ounce of these liquid concentrates per gallon of water. Mix Cynoff WP or Tempo WP at the rate of 2 scoops per gallon when controlling carpenter bee infestations; spray on any wood surface you wish to protect from carpenter bees or where they may want to bore holes and create galleries. One gallon can treat up to 1000 sq./ft. This application rate works well when treating cedar homes and log cabins. These structures are particularly subject to carpenter bees. If you tend to have recurring carpenter bee problems every Spring or Fall, may have to do more spraying. This will deter future infestations of many pests, including carpenter bees.